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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ASUNCION 000200

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/BSC, WHA/AND, AND USOAS
DEPT PASS TO USAID LAC/AA
EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES FOR LEGATT
NSC FOR TOM SHANNON/KIM BREIER
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD DAN JOHNSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [PA](#)

SUBJECT: PARAGUAY'S GROWING CONCERN ABOUT LEFTIST

(INCLUDING FARC) THREAT

REF: A. ASUNCION 00199
[1B](#). 04 ASUNCION 01247
[1C](#). ASUNCION 00148
[1D](#). 04 ASUNCION 01602
[1E](#). ASUNCION 00152
[1F](#). ASUNCION 00188

Classified By: Charge Kevin M. Johnson, reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[11](#). (S) Summary: Paraguayan authorities have arrested suspects tied to the leftist Free Fatherland Party (Partido Patria Libre, or PPL) in connection with the ongoing kidnapping of Cecilia Cubas. Telephone records connect the suspects to the kidnapping and ransom negotiations. The GOP claims evidence showing PPL ties to the FARC in Colombia and Bolivarian Circles in Venezuela, and direct FARC involvement in supporting the Cubas kidnapping (ref A). Other leftist organizations' solidarity with the PPL lends additional credence to the growing belief that the PPL seeks to organize an opposition movement in the countryside, with FARC assistance. President Duarte's recent actions suggest he is taking the threat of leftist subversion and criminality more seriously. End Summary.

The Abduction

[12](#). (C) On September 21, a group of armed assailants kidnapped former President Raul Cubas' 31-year-old daughter, Cecilia Cubas (ref B). The investigation got off to a slow start, in large part because the Cubas family initially rejected offers of official assistance with the ransom negotiations, but also because Paraguayan authorities were disorganized and slow to pursue several important leads. Ms. Cubas' whereabouts remain unknown.

PPL Members Linked to the Crime

[13](#). (U) The investigation finally produced a string of arrests in late January, based primarily on telephone records that connect at least seven suspects to the kidnapping and subsequent ransom negotiations (ref C). At least two of the seven suspects in custody, Osmar Martinez and Anastasio Mieres Burgos, have clear ties to the PPL. Another, Jose Martinez, is Osmar Martinez's brother. An eighth suspect, Manuel Cristaldo Mieres, still at large, is Anastasio Mieres Burgos' nephew.

[14](#). (U) Note: The PPL was outlawed for advocating the violent overthrow of the government after its two most prominent members, Juan Arrom and Anuncio Marti, were implicated in the 2001 kidnapping of Maria Edith DiBernardi (ref D). Arrom and Marti were later granted political asylum in Brazil based on allegations that they were tortured by police while in custody. End Note.

[15](#). (U) According to statements Arrom has made to the press regarding the Cubas investigation, Osmar Martinez and Anastasio Mieres Burgos were expelled from the PPL in October 2004. However, Arrom has denounced the investigation as an attempt to "discredit, persecute and repress" the PPL for "political reasons." Marti has complained that PPL members are being subjected to human rights abuses, and has expressed his solidarity with those being "persecuted" by the GOP.

PPL Connections to the FARC

[16](#). (S) President Duarte and Attorney General Oscar Latorre previously reported that Colombian insurgents had helped the PPL in criminal activities to raise funds, such as bank robberies and roadside heists, and in organizing unrest in the countryside (ref E). On February 8, Latorre told Charge and the Colombian Ambassador to Paraguay that the GOP also has evidence of direct FARC involvement in supporting the Cubas kidnapping (ref A).

[17](#). (S) Consistent with what the GOP has told EmbOffs,

Colombian PolOff Raul Sanchez told PolOff that Colombian intelligence has evidence of email communication between PPL members and the FARC in Colombia and Bolivarian Circles in Venezuela. Additionally, at least three PPL members, Anuncio Marti, Victor Colman and Osmar Martinez, have traveled to Colombia on several occasions.

¶18. (U) In recent statements to the press, Osmar Martinez admitted that the PPL has "friendly relations" with the FARC, but denied that the PPL is involved in violent criminal activity.

Support from Other Leftist Organizations

¶19. (U) Other leftist organizations in Paraguay have voiced solidarity and support for the PPL since the January arrests. The Patriotic Front (Frente Patriotico, or FP) denounced the GOP's "institutional imputation of blame for kidnappings on dissident opposition parties," and filed a complaint with the Human Rights Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. (Note: The FP comprises six leftist political parties, none of which is represented at the national level. It was created in December 2004, when it elected a unified leadership structure in preparation for the 2008 presidential elections. End Note.)

¶10. (U) Leftist campesino organizations also have voiced their support for the PPL. Antonio Galeano of the National Front for the Struggle for Sovereignty and Life (Frente Nacional de Lucha por la Soberania y la Vida, or FNLSV) decried the kidnapping investigation as a "witch hunt" and denounced alleged abuses by the authorities. Luis Aguayo of the National Coordinating Board of Campesino Organizations (Mesa Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas, or MCNOC) characterized the PPL arrests as "persecution" and "human rights abuses," and affirmed the MCNOC's solidarity with the arrested PPL members. (Note: These organizations did not merely demand evidence proving PPL involvement in the kidnapping -- a reasonable request given Paraguay's history and judicial system -- but simply declared the PPL innocent, in a clearly political move. End Note.)

¶11. (C) Comment: The PPL members linked to the Cubas kidnapping hail from the Departments of San Pedro and Caaguazu, the two regions of greatest anti-government campesino activity. This fact and the campesino organizations' expressions of solidarity with the PPL lend additional credence to the growing belief that the PPL seeks to organize an opposition movement in the countryside, with FARC assistance. End Comment.

Cuban Embassy Enters the Picture

¶12. (C) A GOP source also told EmbOff that the Cuban Embassy hosted a meeting on January 27, which MCNOC representatives attended, to discuss the alleged persecution of leftist party members by Paraguayan authorities conducting the kidnapping investigation and a proposal to further unite the leftist movement in Paraguay.

Duarte Out of Patience

¶13. (C) Comment: Leftist involvement in the Cubas kidnapping appears to have been the "last straw" for President Duarte. Initial warnings from his own allies in 2003 about the Cuban Doctors' activities in the countryside and other attempts to exploit rural grievances for political purposes made little apparent impression on Duarte. As campesino unrest grew in 2004, Duarte took a harder line and with the Cubas kidnapping is convinced leftists here and abroad seek to undermine his government. Duarte's support for Colombian President Alvaro Uribe (ref E) and the recent GOP decision to terminate the Cuban Doctors program (ref F) suggest that Duarte is taking the threat of leftist subversion and criminality seriously. End Comment.

JOHNSON